



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

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PRICES DECLINE AT GOVERNMENT FUR-SEAL AUCTION

A substantial drop in prices of United States fur-seal skins characterized the semiannual auction of Government-owned furs held at St. Louis on October 18, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross Leffler announced today.

A total of 28,782 skins, products of the sealing industry administered by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries on the Pribilof Islands, brought \$1,983,208. This compares with 27,819 skins sold for \$2,547,182 at the April 1957 sale. The average for all skins sold for the account of the United States Government was \$68.90; at the April sale it was \$91.56. The average at the October 1956 sale was \$100.96.

The sale, held at the show rooms of the Fouke Fur Company in St. Louis, Mo., was well attended by United States, Canadian, and European buyers. Department of the Interior officials in attendance included Assistant Secretary Leffler, Arnie J. Suomela, Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife, and Ralph C. Baker, Acting Chief, Division of Resource Management, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries.

The Alaska skins included 9,843 black, 12,204 dyed "Matara" (brown), and 6,735 of the recently introduced new shade called "Kitovi".

The Kitovi skins brought an average of \$73.04, a decline of 29.3 percent from the April average of \$119.39. Matara skins sold for an average of \$67.85, a decrease of 13.4 percent under the April average of \$81.91. Black skins averaged \$67.39, a decline of 16.5 percent from the April average of \$88.32. Percentage changes in price are calculated on the basis of grade and shade of color.

In addition to the United States skins, 13,068 South Africa fur-seal skins were sold for private shippers and the account of the Government of the Union of South Africa at an average of \$26.91, a decrease of 23 percent from the last sale. Four hundred eighty-seven Uruguay fur-seal skins were sold for the Government of Uruguay at an average of \$20.32; the April average was \$31.04.

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